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Message Text

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11
ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 SIL-01 LAB-01 /061 W
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P 220957Z NOV 74
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8592
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 13832

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SOCI, RP, ELAB
SUBJECT: ARCHBISHOP SIN SPEAKS OUT AGAINST GOVERNMENT
DETENTION POLICY

REF: A. MANILA 13826 (NOTAL
B. MANILA A-372 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN MEETING NOVEMBER 21 WITH FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS, ARCHBISHOP SIN SPOKE OUT AGAINST GOVERNMENT'S DETENTION POLICY AND CLAIMED A "CREEPING CLIMATE OF FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY ...IS SWEEPING THE COUNTRY." SIN ALSO ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO ABUSES BY THE MILITARY, THE HUNGER STRIKE OF LOPEZ AND OSMENA, THE BARANGAY SYSTEM, LABOR UNIONS, PEASANT ORGANIZATIONS, AND AGRARIAN REFORM. HE ANNOUNCED HE HAD SENT OFF A CABLE TO PRESIDENT FORD IN SEOUL REQUESTING THE PRESIDENT'S GOOD OFFICES IN SECURING JUSTICE FOR THE IMPRISONED BISHOP DANIEL TJI. THESE LATEST BLUNT THOUGH WELL-REASONED UTTERANCES INDICATE A CONTINUED DETERMINATION ON HIS PART TO CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT ON MATTERS RELATED TO CHURCH INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN MEETING WITH GROUP OF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS EVENING NOVEMBER 21, MANILA'S OUTSPOKEN ARCHBISHOP
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JAIME L. SIN SPOKE OUT AGAINST GOVERNMENT'S DETENTION

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POLICY AND CLAIMED A "CREEPING CLIMATE OF FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY ... IS SWEEPING THE COUNTRY." AP HAS FILED STORY (NOV 22) ON HIGHLIGHTS OF INTERVIEW STATEMENT BY SIN HANDED OUT TO FOREIGN PRESS REPRESENTATIVES. FULL TEXT OF STATEMENT BEING AIR POUCHED.

2. SIN STATED THAT "INDEFINITE DETENTION WITHOUT PROMPT FILING OF CHARGES AND PROSPECTS OF AN EARLY, SPEEDY AND OPEN TRIAL IS UNJUST." HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE MARTIAL LAW REGIME SHOULD ISSUE A "CLEAR-CUT DEFINITION OF SUBVERSION...A CATCH-ALL TERM THAT COULD INCLUDE ALMOST ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING...IF IT HOPES TO ELIMINATE THE CREEPING CLIMATE OF FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY THAT IS TREATENING THE COUNTYR."

3. WHILE COMMENDING EFFORTS OF LEADERS OF THE AFP TO CURB ABUSES, HE NOTED THEY "HAVE NOT ALTOGETHER BEEN SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE I KNOW OF CASES OF TORTURE AND BRUTAL KILLING...WHICH THE CHURCH HAS PROTESTED." SIN SPECIFICALLY COMPLAINED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE KILLINGS OF TWO MEN HE SAID HAD BEEN PICKED UP BY THE MILITARY. ONE OF THE KILLINGS INVOLVED MARSMAN ALVAREZ, BROTHER OF FORMER CONCON DELEGATE HEHERSON ALVAREZ.

4. REGARDING THE HUNGER STRIKES OF POLITICAL DETAINEES EUGENIO LOPEZ, JR. AND SERGIO OSMENA III (REF. A)N SIN EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN AND SAID HE HAD REQUESTED PERMISSION TO VISIT ALL DETAINEES INCLUDING LOPEZ AND OSMENA. THE ARCHBISHOP ALSO ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO QUESTIONS REGARDING THE BARANGAY SYSTEM, LABOR UNIONS, PEASANT ORGANIZATIONS, AND AGRARIAN REFORM.

5. THE ARCHBISHOP TOUCHED UPON THE MATTER OF IMPRISONED SOUTH KOREAN BISHOP DANIEL TJI (MANILA 13445), NOTING THAT HE HAD THAT DAY SENT THREE CABLES (ADDRESSED TO BISHOP TJI, PRESIDENT PARK, AND PRESIDENT FORD) TO SEOUL ON THE MATTER. THE CABLE TO PRESIDENT FORD, WRITTEN IN THE NAME OF THE CBCP (CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES), REQUESTS THE PRESIDENT'S CONFIDENTIAL

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GOOD OFFICES IN "SECURING JUSTICE FOR BISHOP DANIEL TJI AND OTHER POLITICAL DETAINEES AND IN EFFECTING THEIR RELEASE."

6. ACCORDING TO A SOURCE CLOSE TO THE ARCHBISHOP, MEETING WITH FOREIGN PRESS GREW OUT OF OFF-THE-RECORD DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS ASSN. AT WHICH ARCHBISHOP HAD BEEN "ROASTED". HE HAD RESPONDED BY

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INVITING THEM TO BE HIS GUESTS NEXT TIME AROUND. THE GET-TOGETHER AT ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE WAS TO HAVE BEEN "A SOCIAL OCCASION". HOWEVER, ONE OF CORRESPONDENTS HAD SUBMITTED LIST OF QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE. SIN BELIEVED THAT HE "SHOULD MAKE A STAND" -- THUS DECISION TO ISSUE THE STATEMENT. FOREIGN PRESS GROUP CONSISTED OF SOME 30 CORRESPONDENTS (INCLUDING AP, UPI, AFP) AND STRINGERS, APPROXIMATELY HALF OF WHICH WERE FILIPINOS.

7. COMMENT: THESE LATEST BLUNT THOUGH WELL-REASONED UTTERANCES BY ARCHBISHOP SIN INDICATE A CONTINUED DETERMINATION ON HIS PART TO CRITICIZE GOVERNMENT ON MATTERS RELATED TO CHURCH INTERESTS. HIS BOLD STAND ON NOVALICHES VIGIL INITIALLY SET THE TONE LAST SEPTEMBER. BY NO MEANS IS SIN ATTEMPTING TO PROMOTE OPPOSITION TO THE MARCOS REGIME, BUT HIS EFFORTS TO TRY AND KEEP REGIME HONEST OBVIOUSLY HAS IMPACT BROADER THAN CHURCH CIRCLES.
SULLIVAN

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